



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

School Committee Minutes 01/11/2005

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2005
7:00 PM

Present: Paul Schlichtman, Chair
Jeff Thielman, Vice Chair
Martin Thrope, Secretary
Barbara Goodman
Joani LaMachia
Suzanne Owayda
Sue Sheffler

Supt. Kay Donovan
CFO: Rob Addelson
Special Education Director: Marilyn Bisbicos

Absent: Joanne Gurry

Call to order: 7:00

SUPERINTENDENT INTERVIEW

Marie Ferrari

BREAK

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Nora Mann – spoke relative to the superintendent search thanking the Committee for the process and the extraordinary opportunity to see great candidates and to see the School Committee in action. Ms. Mann voiced support for candidate Nathan Levenson.

APS parent Mark Keegan also thanked the School Committee for the open process and echoed the comments made by Ms. Mann.

COMMITTEE VOTES

.. Korean War Diplomas – Supt. Donovan requested that the School Committee approve the awarding of diplomas for Arlington students who left Arlington High School to serve in the Korean War and did not have the opportunity to return to school after their years of service. Mrs. Donovan would like to make the presentation at the January 25th school committee meeting and requested an early start time of 7:00 pm on that day.

.. On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Owayda it was unanimously Voted to grant diplomas to the Veterans of the Korean War at the school committee meeting of January 25, 2005 with a 7:00 pm start time.

Menotomy Preschool Tuition Increase

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously Voted to approve the recommended tuition increase at Menotomy Preschool for the 2005-2006 school year

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was Voted to refer the Menotomy Preschool Program to the budget subcommittee as well as the curriculum subcommittee to review the program, its financial profile, as well as the curriculum profile of the program.

Mr. Schlichtman suggested that the committee follow up by placing the item on a fall agenda.

Warrant Approval

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. LaMachia

Voted to approve warrant # 05079 in the amount of \$613,728.02. 6-0-1 (abstention by Mr. Schlichtman)

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Mr. Thielman it was unanimously

Voted to approve warrant #05092 in the amount of \$ 517,822.43

Supt. Donovan stated that she would submit the usual articles to Town Counsel to be placed on the warrant for Town Meeting.

BUDGET

Supt. Donovan requested that the School Committee approve the proposed preliminary FY2006 budget of \$34,280,902.00. Mrs. Donovan explained that the figure includes the items outlined at the budget workshop on January 9th. The budget is an increase of \$1,943,235. or 6% over the FY05 budget.

Mr. Thielman moved with a second from Ms. Owayda to accept the Superintendent's recommended preliminary budget of \$34,280,902.00 for the fiscal year 2006.

Ms. Goodman declared that she would vote the bottom line budget only, not the line items, stating that the Committee needs a full public discussion on the budget first. Mr. Thrope stated that the current figure does not adequately address the services the school system needs.

Mr. Thrope continued by making a motion seconded by Ms. Goodman to increase the FY06 bottom line budget to an amount sufficient enough to restore services to the level of the FY03 budget.

Both Mr. Thrope and Ms. Goodman voiced frustration over the loss of positions throughout the system and believed that the School Committee should ask for an amount that will provide the essential services to students.

Supt. Donovan stated that to restore the level of services to the FY03 budget would mean millions of dollars more to the budget, adding that with the Town facing a deficit for this fiscal year the School Committee's request would not be viewed as realistic.

Mr. Schlichtman ruled Mr. Thrope's motion out of order stating that he may not delegate a number to the Superintendent but indicated that if Mr. Thrope wanted to make a motion with a dollar amount he would allow that.

In response to Mr. Thrope's question on how much money would be needed to restore services, Supt. Donovan estimated over 2 million dollars.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Goodman it was

Moved to increase the FY06 bottom line budget by 2million dollars or to \$36,280,902. to restore services to the level of the FY03 budget. Roll Call 5-2 motion fails (Ms. Goodman and Mr. Thrope with yes votes, Mr. Schlichtman, Ms. Owayda, Ms. Sheffler, Ms. LaMachia and Mr. Thielman with no votes).

The remaining Committee members were not in favor of increasing the budget due to the town's fiscal constraints pointing out that the School Committee's credibility would be questioned if requesting a 12% increase.

On Mr. Thielman's original motion

Voted to accept the Superintendent's recommendation for the bottom line preliminary budget for the FY06 in the amount of \$34,280,902. Roll Call: Unanimous

NEW BUSINESS

None

Break 9:45 – 10:15 the Committee reviewed feedback forms collected throughout the day as well as forms from the audience.

SUPERINTENDENT CANDIDATES DISCUSSION AND VOTE

All School Committee members took the opportunity to acknowledge Supt. Donovan and her leadership in the Arlington Public Schools. Each member had a chance to speak on the selection process and the candidates and affirmed that the Committee is ready to move to the next level in the process.

Ms. Owayda offered support to Nate Levenson stating that we are ready to move to the next level and believes Mr. Levenson can accomplish that.

Committee member Jeff Thielman stated that he would not be offended if the School Committee chooses to recess and meet on Thursday (he would be out of town for the next few days) but would like to speak to the candidates. Mr. Thielman supported Nate Levenson contingent on a site visit.

Ms. Sheffler also supported Mr. Levenson noting that he was an "out of the box" candidate and could take us the furthest the fastest; Ms. Sheffler also supported Andre Ravenelle.

Ms. LaMachia believed that Andre Ravenelle exhibited a human element that needs to be preserved and supported him for the position but also supported a site visit for Nate Levenson.

Mr. Thrope echoed support for Mr. Levenson stating that he was competent and proficient.

Ms. Goodman stated that more data is needed on the candidates, that the interview is only one part of the process and felt the committee should not be pressured at this late hour and was not comfortable making any kind of decision. Ms. Goodman was impressed with Mr. Silvermans's ratio of "we to I" during the interview process and had concerns with Mr. Levenson's reversed ratio of 'I to we' statements. Ms. Goodman believed that Mr. Ravenelle looked at the humanity of every person and their total growth.

Mr. Schlichtman commented that any one of the four candidates would be a good fit for Arlington. Ms. Ferrari possesses depth and skill at all levels and would work good with the Town and Mr. Silverman would be highly successful, easy to work with, setting high standards and in securing funding. Mr. Ravenelle would be the best fit for Arlington with a command of the curriculum, foreign language and arts interests as well as excellent communication skills. Mr. Levenson presents as an extraordinary candidate: very different, who would require the committee to work much harder; Mr. Schlichtman pointed out that he would need a site visit for this candidate.

*On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Mr. Thrope it was
Voted to move the 11:00 rule for 15 minutes*

*On a motion by Ms. LaMachia seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was
Voted to enter executive session for the purpose to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel, to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel. Roll Call: Unanimous*

Executive session 11:05 – 11:10

Upon return to open session the Committee discussed at length conducting site visits to Lexington and Harvard within the next two weeks in order to report back at the January 25th meeting.

*Mr. Thielman moved that the School Committee move forward with a site visit on candidate Nathan Levenson.
Ms. Goodman stated that she was uncomfortable making a decision at the late hour without reviewing all materials.*

*On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Mr. Thrope it was
Voted to determinate debate on Mr. Thielman's motion.*

The 11:00 rule was moved for 15 minutes until 11:30. Ms. Goodman exited the meeting. (returning minutes later).

On Mr. Thielman's original motion

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Sheffler

It was voted to direct Future Management Systems to move forward with a site visit on Nathan Levenson. 6-1 (no vote by Ms. Goodman)

*On a motion by Ms. Sheffler seconded by Mr. Thielman it was
Voted to recess the meeting until Thursday January 13, at 7:00 pm.*

Mr. Schlichtman declared the meeting recessed until Thursday, January 13, 2005 at 7:00 PM.

*Submitted by
Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary*